

Message Text

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UNCLAS STATE 199569

FOR JOHN BLACKEN FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT BANJUL 1363 ACTION SECSTATE INFO
DAKAR AUG 05.

QUOTE: UNCLAS BANJUL 1363

JOINT STATE, AID, PC MESSAGE

AID FORAFR/SFWA, PEACE CORPS FOR GAYMON
DEPARTMENT FOR AF/W, AF/EX

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG GA

SUBJ: CONTINUING ENERGY CRISIS IN THE GAMBIA

REF: (A) BANJUL 1057 (B) BANJUL 1071 (C) 77 BANJUL 1660

1. REFTEL BA INDICATED THAT A REALISTIC PREDICTION FOR RELIEF
OF BANJUL'S POWER CRISIS WOULD BE SIX WEEKS. IT HAS NOW BEEN SIX
WEEKS SINCE THE FAILURE OF THE GAMBIA'S MAIN GENERATOR. DURING
THAT PERIOD, THE SITUATION HAS STEADILY WORSENERED WITH LITTLE
SIGN OF RELIEF IN SIGHT.

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2. FOLLOWING FAILURE OF BANJUL'S MAIN GENERATOR, THE CITY AND
SURROUNDING AREAS WERE DEPENDENT UPON TWO SMALLER STANDBY
GENERATORS, WORKING FULL TIME AT 125 PER CENT OF CAPACITY. THE
STANDBY SETS WERE ABLE TO PROVIDE LIMITED POWER IN SCATTERED
AREAS OF BANJUL ITSELF BUT NO POWER WHATSOEVER TO OUTLYING
RESIDENTIAL AREAS. SUBSEQUENTLY, ONE OF THE STANDBY GENERATORS

ALSO FAILED, REDUCING THE SUPPLY BY ONE HALF. FOR THE PAST WEEK, POWER HAS BEEN AVAILABLE ONLY FOR MINIMAL HEALTH AND SANITATION REQUIREMENTS. ONLY SERVICE SINCE FAILURE OF SECOND STANDBY GENERATOR HAS BEEN FOR WATER SUPPLY AND HOSPITAL.

3. TECHNICIANS AND ENGINEERS HAVE BEEN WORKING STEADILY ON GENERATOR NO. 6 FOR PAST WEEKS AND BELIEVE IT MAY BE OPERATIONAL WITHIN ONE WEEK. NO. 6 HAS 2 MEGAWATT CAPACITY AND NORMAL SERVICE REQUIREMENTS CALL FOR 5 MEGAWATS. IF NO. 6 IS RESTORED, REMAINING OPERATIONAL STANDBY SET WILL BE SHUT DOWN FOR "THOROUGH SERVICING." RESTORATION OF NO. 6 WILL CONSTITUTE A RETURN TO THE SITUATION AS IT EXISTED DURING FIRST FEW WEEKS OF CURRENT CRISIS, I.E. LIMITED POWER IN SCATTERED AREAS OF BANJUL ITSELF.

4. IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN POST ADMIN OFFICER AND GUC (GAMBIA UTILITIES CORPORATION), LATTER OFFICIAL WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT CURRENT OUTLOOK. GUC OFFICIAL SAID, "LET'S DON'T KID OURSELVES ANY FURTHER, WE'RE INTO THIS FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER SIX MONTHS." OFFICIAL WAS HOPEFUL THAT GENERATOR NO. 6 COULD BE RESTORED, THEREBY MAINTAINING MINIMAL HEALTH AND SANITATION REQUIREMENTS. HOWEVER, HE DID NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY OF COMPLETE BLACK OUT FOR INDEFINITE PERIOD.

5. POSSIBILITY OF COMPLETE BLACKOUT RAISES OBVIOUS QUESTIONS OF HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR OFFICIAL AMERICAN COMMUNITY. PC DIRECTOR AND ACTING CHARGE HAVE DISCUSSED POSSIBILITY OF RELOCATING
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THOSE VOLUNTEERS PRESENTLY IN THE AFFECTED AREA TO SENEGAL SHOULD A COMPLETE BLACKOUT OCCUR. RELOCATION WOULD REMAIN IN EFFECT UNTIL "NORMAL" HEALTH AND SANITATION REQUIREMENTS WERE RESTORED.

6. REFTEL C (SUBMITTED DURING NOVEMBER 1977 POWER FAILURE) DISCUSSED POTENTIAL HEALTH HAZARDS OF PROLONGED POWER OUTAGE. AS INDICATED IN PARAGRAPHS 3 AND 4 REFTEL C, MOST SERIOUS SANITATION PROBLEM WOULD RESULT FROM DISRUPTION OF WATER SUPPLY. FIRES ARE ALSO A POSSIBILITY BUT LESS LIKELY AS THIS IS THE RAINY SEASON.

7. FRANCIS M'BOGE, NEWLY APPOINTED SECRETARY GENERAL, INFORMED AID/ BANJUL THAT PRESIDENT HAD SENT A MISSION TO UN AND TO AID/W TO SEEK ASSISTANCE TO ALLEVIATE THE PRESENT ENERGY CRISIS. HE REQUESTED THAT AID/BANJUL GIVE ANY ASSISTANCE POSSIBLE TO SUPPORT THEIR MISSION. NESBERG

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

NOTE BY OCT: ORIGINAL DISTRIBUTION AF/ISO,AID,PC,OC,CCO,EB,ICA, CA,PER,OPR,INTE,DODE,MED,DOE,SOE,IO,OES,SY.

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